

From: [Holsman, Marianne](#)
To: [Smith, Judy](#); [R10 Press Team](#)
Subject: RE: Wind borne dust at FMC site
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 10:35:00 AM

Great! Thanks for taking care of that and sending this follow-up.

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From: Smith, Judy
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 10:22 AM
To: R10 Press Team
Subject: FW: Wind borne dust at FMC site

Here is the FMC dust follow up article from this morning's Idaho State Journal and the statement I sent to the reporter last night.

FMC radioactivity considered negligible

Monitors alert, but officials not concerned over Saturday air quality warnings

BY DEBBIE BRYCE

For the Journal

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes issued a warning Saturday evening regarding "a health concern" over radioactive material being carried by high winds from the former FMC plant site near Pocatello.

The air quality warning was directed at residents in Pocatello, American Falls, Fort Hall and Blackfoot. Bruce Olenick, Pocatello regional administrator for the State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, said during the wind event Saturday the DEQ in Pocatello recorded particulate matter at 74.9 ug/m³ concentration, which equates to a "moderate" Air Quality Index rating of 60.

The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution from particulate matter, Olenick said.

For example, an AQI value of 50 represents good air quality and little potential risk to public health, while an AQI value over 300 represents hazardous air quality with potentially serious health impacts from particulate matter. The "moderate" AQI category indicates air quality is acceptable. However, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people.

“Although DEQ does not directly measure airborne particulate radioactivity around Pocatello, the amount of radioactivity emitted to the air from the slag piles at the FMC site during the wind storm on Saturday would be very difficult to discern from the naturally occurring radioactivity in the tons of airborne dust from the Snake River Plain,” Olenick said. “Even if one were to assume all of the airborne dust was from the slag piles at FMC, which was certainly not the case, the radiological risk to a member of the general public would be negligible at best.”

Paul Yochum, the last plant manager at the FMC plant located west of Pocatello in Power County and on the Fort Hall Reservation, said six air monitors are in place at the site and were alerting Saturday because of high winds.

“The natural occurring radioactive material at the FMC site is slag,” Yochum said. “If the monitors go off, we increase the water to keep dust down. If we can’t control it, we shut down.”

Yochum said the site supervisor decides if construction should continue or if operations needs to be suspended until the wind subsides.

Operations at the site were not suspended Saturday despite a wind advisory and low visibility warning being issued at the Pocatello Regional Airport that day.

A Unilateral Administrative Order was issued in June 2013, compelling the FMC to do remediation at the site.

Construction started last September and stopped in December.

On March 3, crews resumed grading and contouring at the site, which will allow water run-off to be captured in containment ponds that will eventually be capped.

FMC project manager Jonathan Williams said Monday that the company follows an approved Dust Control and Air Monitoring Plan, with field oversight by EPA.

The plan has a goal of no visible dust from the earth moving operations. All heavy equipment operators are in enclosed vehicles with particulate filters on air intakes. Water trucks are used to prevent and suppress dust.

Williams said during Saturday’s high wind event, extra measures were put in place to protect workers and nearby residents, including consolidating work into smaller areas for more effective dust control and shifting work to areas with coarser material, which generate less dust.

The Tribes did not return calls for this story Monday.

From: Smith, Judy
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2015 5:01 PM
To: 'bryce.debbie Non- [REDACTED]'
Cc: Sheldrake, Beth; Williams, Jonathan
Subject: Wind borne dust at FMC site

Hi Debbie – Here is the statement from EPA. If you want an attribution, the information was provided by Jonathan Williams, Project Manager for the FMC site.

EPA's highest priority at the FMC cleanup is to protect site workers and nearby residents.

FMC follows an approved Dust Control and Air Monitoring Plan, with field oversight by EPA. The plan has a stated goal of no visible dust from the earth-moving operations. All heavy equipment operators are in enclosed vehicles with particulate filters on air intakes. Water and other tackifiers are used to prevent and suppress dust.

A network of five air monitors alert the FMC contractor if dust levels reach one-tenth of the OSHA permissible limit, which leads to additional measures to suppress dust. During Saturday's high wind event, the alarms were triggered, including the monitor placed up-wind of all work areas. Extra measures were put in place to protect workers and nearby residents, including consolidating work into smaller areas for more effective dust control and shifting work to areas with coarser material which generate less dust.

Idaho DEQ maintains ambient air monitors throughout the state and real time air quality data can be found at: <http://airquality.deq.idaho.gov/>

Here is link to the EPA fact sheet about current and planned work at the site:
http://www.epa.gov/region10/pdf/sites/emf/emf_2015%20update_factsheet.pdf

Please call or e-mail me if you need additional information.

Judy

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